**Notes for Next Sunday**

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

The Old Testament reading is about God making a promise to control the earth and more specifically worldwide flooding. In the Gospel lesson we see Jesus’ control over all elements of storms and even walking on water, feeding multitudes and healing the sick.

Psalm (Psalm 136:1-9). This is a liturgy of praise to the Lord as Creator and as Israel’s Redeemer. Its theme is “The Lord’s steadfast love endures.” The Hebrew word for love means an “undeserved love and mercy.” The psalm summarizes the Lord’s covenant faithfulness to his people and calls upon them to praise Him for His loving deeds.

Old Testament (Genesis 9:8-17). Noah and his family had come out of the Ark which God used to protect them from the flood He had sent over the whole earth. In our reading God makes a binding form of a divine promise by means of a covenant to never again flood the earth with a flood that would destroy all life. A reminder of this promise is the rainbow at the end of a rain storm.

Epistle (Ephesians 3:14-21). Here Paul prays for the Ephesians. He prays that through the Holy Spirit they will begin understand and appreciate the incredible love God has for them. This love totally surpasses anything humans can begin to grasp. In a sense the calling of the Gentile Ephesians is a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Gospel (Mark 6:45-56). Mark seems to emphasize how readily the people accept the result of Jesus’ miracles (just prior, five thousand were glad to be fed; the disciples now embrace the calming of the storm; the crowds bring all their sick to Jesus) but don’t have the faith to realize what this means. Jesus is not just a “bread king” for immediate and temporal needs; He is a victorious and eternal King, and faith in him is more significant than the immediate result of a miracle.

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

**Psalm 136:1-9**

1﻿ **Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. *His love endures forever.* ﻿2﻿ Give thanks to the God of gods. *His love endures forever.* ﻿3﻿ Give thanks to the Lord of lords: *His love endures forever.* ﻿4﻿ to him who alone does great wonders, *His love endures forever.* ﻿5﻿ who by his understanding made the heavens, *His love endures forever.* ﻿6﻿ who spread out the earth upon the waters, *His love endures forever.* ﻿7﻿ who made the great lights— *His love endures forever.* ﻿8﻿ the sun to govern the day, *His love endures forever.* ﻿9﻿ the moon and stars to govern the night; *His love endures forever.***

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*136:1 steadfast love.* This refrain, repeated in every verse, emphasizes God’s grace that is manifest with all of His works. (TLSB) Hebrew *chesed*, “loyalty” to one’s community; most common term for God’s grace in the Psalms (125 times). Luther described *chesed* as “goodness in action” (AE 14:50). (TLSB p. 843)

*136:5 by his understanding.* The story of creation is a story of God’s love. He made everything in the universe for the good of his people. Although the whole human race rebelled against him, the Lord continues to provide sun and rain, food and life for both the evil and the good. Although God gives daily bread even to the ungrateful, his people gladly acknowledge that the preservation of the earth and its blessings is a continued display of God’s love. (PBC)

**Old Testament – Genesis 9:8-17**

**8﻿ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ﻿9﻿ “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ﻿10﻿ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ﻿11﻿ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ﻿12﻿ And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ﻿13﻿ I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ﻿14﻿ Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ﻿15﻿ I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ﻿16﻿ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” ﻿17﻿ So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*9:9 I now establish my covenant.* God’s covenants are unilateral; He obligates Himself to observe the terms of His own contract (here a reassurance of flood’s survivors after their fearsome experience). (TLSB)

*9:11 Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood.* Regions may be devastated; people and animals may be swept away by floods. But never again will a flood be universal. (TLSB)

*9:13 rainbow.* When the marvelous rainbow appears, believers will recall with joy its God-given significance. Rainbows may not have existed until this time (AE 2:148).

**Epistle – Ephesians 3:14-21**

**14﻿ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ﻿15﻿ from whom his whole family﻿a﻿ in heaven and on earth derives its name. ﻿16﻿ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ﻿17﻿ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ﻿18﻿ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ﻿19﻿ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ﻿20﻿ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ﻿21﻿ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*3:14 I kneel.* Expresses deep emotion and reverence, as people in Paul’s day usually stood to pray. (CSB)

*3:16 Strengthened your with power.* Paul requests that God would give the Ephesians strength – spiritual strength, which comes only through the Holy Spirit. Causing Christ to dwell in believers’ hearts is the real work of the Holy Spirit. (PBC)

*3:16 Inner being.* This is our mind and our heart. It is our conscience, our will, and our commitments. The actions we take, as Jesus said, flow from the inside out (Luke 6:43-45). (LL)

*3:17 in love*. This is agape love which is purely unconditional, intentionally sacrificial, expressive in both word and action, and enduring, as in the case of Christ, even to death on the cross. (LL)

*3:19 surpasses knowledge.* This is the immeasurability of God’s wisdom and Christ’s love (Job 11:5-9; Rom. 11:33). Knowledge of Christ is praised in the Letter, but the human mind cannot fully comprehend Him. (TLSB)

*3:20 immeasurably more.* ”God’s giving is not limited by our asking. “He is like an eternal, unfailing fountain. The more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give. God desires nothing more seriously from us than that we ask Him for much and great things (LC III 56). (TLSB)

**Gospel – Mark 6:45-56**

**45﻿ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ﻿46﻿ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. ﻿47﻿ When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ﻿48﻿ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ﻿49﻿ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ﻿50﻿ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ﻿51﻿ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ﻿52﻿ for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. ﻿53﻿ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ﻿54﻿ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ﻿55﻿ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ﻿56﻿ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*6:45 immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat.* Jesus obliged the disciples to embark for the other shore. This shows that Jesus was responsible for the disciples’ all-night struggle against the wind. Note further that this was the second time in a day that Jesus commanded the disciples to do something difficult or even impossible (cf. v. 37). (TLSB)

*6:48 He saw the disciples straining*. Jesus though deep in prayer was aware of their situation. He left them struggle for some time in order to show them, as He so often shows us, that He is able to help in the hour of need. (PBC)

*6:49 walking on the lake.* Jesus comes to reveal Himself as the Lord of all creation. (TLSB)

*6:49 a ghost.* Popular Jewish superstition held that the appearance of spirits during the night brought disaster. The disciples’ terror was prompted by what they may have thought was a water spirit. (CSB)

*6:52 they had not understood about the loaves.* Despite the unmistakable ways Jesus had just displayed His divine nature and power, the disciples somehow remain in the dark. (TLSB)

*6:52 their hearts were hardened.* Their hearts were not open to what Jesus was seeking to teach them. Mark is very candid about exposing the spiritual weaknesses of the disciples and very lucid expounding the greatness of Christ. (PBC)

*6:56 touch even the edge of his cloak.* This confidence echoes that of the woman who touched Jesus’ garment and was healed (5:28-29). (TLSB)